

## Encounters

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Summary: While wandering the ruined streets of New York, Steve is hit with a wave of nostalgia and regret. Unsure of what his future will be, he finds comfort where he'd least expect it-a total stranger from this strange time.

## Encounters

Steve walked through the streets of the town that should have been familiar. He mentally slapped himself for thinking so depressingly, but he just couldn't help it, he was having a bad day. Everyone he knew was pretty much dead now, and the few that probably weren't were old. \_Very \_old.

He shoved his hands in his pockets and continued walking, face-down, until he ran into a girl who was texting on her phone.

"Sorry, ma'am."

The girl laughed a bit and apologized too. "I should have been paying attention. This phone is going to be the death of me." she joked.

Steve attempted a small chuckle too, but probably failed by the look the young woman gave him.

"Having a bad day?" she asked.

Steve gave a reluctant short nod, and the girl nodded in understanding.

"I get those once in a while. Soon your mind will turn around and you'll start smiling again, don't worry." she assured, before her phone gave off an obnoxious beeping noise and she jumped to silence it. "Damn thing, how do I change the-oh! Fixed it."

"That was fast." Steve remarked.

"Yeah, I just turned the phone off." she admitted, to which Steve laughed genuinely.

"I don't get those things much either." he also admitted. It was then that he noticed he had turned around and started walking with her. He stopped in place embarrassed, and the girl laughed again.

"I don't mind, you just needed someone to talk to." she stated. "Sometimes, I start ranting to complete strangers. It's about time the same thing happened to me. Rant away."

Steve managed a small smile, and continued to walk. "There's not much to say, really. But my apartment is this way." he nodded in the direction they were facing.

She nodded too, before tripping over a demolished curb, to be caught by Steve.

"Thanks. Hard to believe aliens invaded Earth, huh?" she asked.

"Yeah, that came as a bit of a shock to me too." he joked.

She chuckled a bit and continued walking. "It's kind of like a Doctor Who thing, Aliens invading the earth. But instead of the last of the Timelords saving Earth, it was the Avengers." she stated. "Not how I ever imagined an alien invasion to go."

"I personally never imagined an alien invasion." Steve admitted.

"I don't think anyone ever does, it's not like they teach 'alien awareness' in our schools."

"True." Steve smiled.

"See? You're smiling now." she stated. "Sometimes all you need is help from a friendly stranger."

"I guess you're right." he smiled a bit wider. "What's Doctor Who?" he asked.

"It's an old British TV show that's still around today. It's about a 900-year-old time-traveling alien who goes around saving several planets." she announced. "One of my favorites."

"Sounds interesting."

"Yeah, it's pretty epic." she nodded.

Steve couldn't help but notice how much even language had changed throughout his time being frozen.

"Whoa, that building is done." she pointed to a large toppled building.

Steve nodded his agreement.

"You know, a lot of people think the Avengers are the bad guys, just because the city is ruined. But they fail to realize that we were

being \_attacked\_ by an \_army\_ of \_aliens\_. Would they rather have a damaged city, or an enslaved species?"

"Yeah, the Avengers are kinda...cool." Steve said awkwardly, never one to brag, but he was supposed to keep his identity a secret.

"Cool's an understatement. From what I gather, there's a Norse God, a giant green guy who destroyed Harlem a while ago, of course Iron Man was with them, and then there was Captain freakin' America! I thought he was dead." she stated.

"So did a lot of people..." Steve blushed.

"And not just that, but it looks like he hasn't aged a day. There were also two other guys, but I forget who."

Steve resisted the urge to inform her of their identities.

"I wonder how other religions are faring now that it's revealed that Norse Gods exist?" she questioned.

Steve laughed a bit. "I'm not entirely sure."

"Although they just might be more aliens...Good thing I brushed up on Norse Mythology after I became addicted to How to Train Your Dragon, right?"

"I guess." he replied.

"And Captain America, didn't he crash a plane to save this exact city? He must love this place in order to come back from the grave to save it again. Unless he was somehow in some sort of stasis, I guess. Anything's possible now right? Oh, sorry, I'm ranting now." she apologized.

Steve laughed. "No, no, it's interesting. What's stasis?"

"A sci-fi term for suspended animation. Frozen in a way that he doesn't age no matter how much time passes, like...Avatar!"

"Avatar?"

"Only the greatest cartoon ever!" She practically yelled. "A twelve-year-old boy discovers he's the Avatar, a guy with some pretty cool powers, right? So he runs off, and crashes during a storm. He wakes up 100 years later to find out that there has been a century-long world war. He eventually restores peace three seasons later. Huh, that seems...scarily similar to Captain America's situation, huh? Besides the century-long war, of course."

"Yeah, that is pretty similar." Steve admitted.

"Captain America's luckier, though. Turns out right after he left, the war started, and his entire race was destroyed, making him the last airbender." she stated.

Airbender?

"But despite all the difficulties of being frozen for so long, it was a good thing he was frozen. He had way more friends than before, he saved the world, and everyone adored him after that! And he found the girl he would marry. I hope the same thing happens to Captain America, now. It must be pretty sad to wake up and notice everything's changed."

"I bet." Steve said, while pondering all that she said.

Maybe something good will happen to him. He's already made friends, he saved the world, people look up to him again, maybe everything will be alright in the end.

"Wow, a lot has changed, hasn't it? The people, the culture, internet, pretty much everything. Well, he's definitely in my prayers now." she stated.

Steve smiled at this. "...Mine too." he awkwardly said. "This is my street." he said, pointing down the road they had just come to.

"Okay. I'm glad to see I could help you smile again." she said as she stopped as well. "It was nice meeting you..."

"Steve." he offered.

"Steve." she finished. "Oh, and I'm Terry, short for Theresa."

"Nice to meet you, Terry."

"And you, Steve." she said as she waved. She then turned around and continued walking, happy to be able to help someone out of their depression.

Terry helped him more than she knew. As Steve continued the walk to his house, he started thinking about the future he could have in this time. Sure, it'll be difficult for him, proven since Terry lost him several times throughout their conversation, but he did have friends to help him through it now. He did save the world.

Steve smiled to himself. For the first time since he woke up, he was sure everything would be just fine.

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